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From: Skahen, Mary (EHS) <mary.skahen@massmail.state.ma.us>
Sent: Thursday, December 13, 2012 2:32 PM
To: Hanchett, James (DPH)
Subject: A Message from Secretary Bigby

Dear Colleagues:

At the start of his first term, Governor Deval Patrick gave me the once in a lifetime opportunity to serve the Commonwealth as Secretary of Health and Human Services. From that day, I have relished every moment of this job. I love serving the Governor and working with you. After six years, I'm honored to have become the Governor's longest serving cabinet secretary.

Today I am announcing that I am departing HHS to seek new opportunities. While this announcement is bittersweet – today is a day for us to look forward and be excited for the next chapter in this Administration.

Governor Patrick today announced John Polanowicz as our next Secretary of Health and Human Services. I couldn't be more pleased with this incredible choice. John has served as President of St. Elizabeth's Medical Center in Brighton since 2011, overseeing the largest hospital in the Stewart Health Care System.

John brings diverse management experience and deep understanding of the important missions of our Secretariat. He joined St. Elizabeth's from Marlborough Hospital, where he served as president and chief executive officer for eight years. He has previously served at UMass Memorial Medical Center and the University of Massachusetts Medical Center.

As a former Company Commander in the U.S. Army, John also brings a deep understanding of the needs of our veterans. John is a graduate of the United States Military Academy at West Point and holds a MBA from Stanford University.

I have told John how lucky he is to have the opportunity to serve with such an amazingly talented group of employees here at HHS.

I hope you will join me in welcoming John Polanowicz as our incoming secretary. We will have more details about our transition timeline to share with you in the near future.

For now, I want us to celebrate all that we have accomplished together.

Since 2007, we successfully implemented the Commonwealth's landmark health care reform law, which has insured over 98 percent of residents and nearly every child in Massachusetts, becoming the model for President Obama's Affordable Care Act. This year, we secured passage of historic legislation to lower the cost of health care for working families and small businesses.

We launched the Massachusetts Health Information Exchange, allowing health care providers across the state to share electronic patient health data. And we advanced programs that provide nation-leading benefits for our veterans, and increased access to services for children, youth and families.

The MassHealth program did the heavy lifting to make sure we achieved near universal coverage and continues to serve as a foundation of reform. Working with our federal partners, we have seen with just our last waiver, more than \$5 billion in additional resources come to the state, support for safety net hospital to transition to integrated systems, and support for payment reforms. We will launch a model for integrating health care services, independent living, and long term supports for dual eligibles to transform care for those members.

We implemented reforms to insure children with serious medical needs have access to a comprehensive array of behavioral health care in home and in the community. And we oversaw systems reforms resulting in the near elimination of kids “stuck” in psychiatric hospitals – something I was told was impossible when I arrived.

We opened the state-of-the-art Worcester Recovery Center and Hospital, providing revolutionary care for hundreds of mental health patients. We adopted the state's Community First initiative to address the long-term needs of elders and persons with disabilities in community settings, establishing Massachusetts as a model employer of persons with disabilities.

The EOHHS agencies are engaged in cross agency efforts on key priorities and have never worked so diligently to integrate services for people. We have also pursued efforts to reduce youth violence and address the needs of children and families in underperforming schools in partnership with other secretariats.

I want to thank you for your commitment to making this impressive list of accomplishments happen. I know it is incomplete, but you all know how hard we have worked and how much we have achieved. In the coming weeks I will connect with you and keep you up to speed on the transition.

Until then, thank you again for this amazing honor.

JudyAnn Bigby, M.D.

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